CLAIMS

1. An assembly for use in suspending a load from a load cell, comprising:

an upper part adapted to be secured to an anchor point and from which said load cell may be suspended; and

a lower part adapted to be suspended from said load cell and from which said load may be suspended,

wherein, in use, said assembly may be used in at least two positions, including:

an inoperative position wherein said load cell is not fitted, where said lower part and hence said load are supported on said upper part;

and

an operative position wherein said lower part and said load are supported only through said load cell and said lower part does not rest on said upper part.

2. The assembly of claim 1, further including means adapted to switch said assembly between said inoperative and said operative positions, being lifting means adapted to lift said lower part off said upper part.

3. The assembly of claim 2, wherein said lifting means is adapted to lift said lower part by lifting said load cell.

4 The assembly of claim 2, wherein said lifting means comprises an upper engagement member, by means of which the upper part engages said load cell, and a lower engagement member by means of which said lower part engages said load cell, wherein said lower engagement member fixes said lower part vertically relative to said load cell, whilst said upper engagement member allows controlled movement of said load cell relative to said upper part.

5. The assembly of claim 4 wherein said upper engagement member is adapted to rotate about an axis and has a portion offset from said axis.

6. The assembly of claim 5 wherein said upper engagement member is adapted to engage said load cell at said offset portion.

7. The assembly of claim 5 wherein said upper engagement member comprises a cranked shaft.

8. The assembly of claim 5, wherein said assembly is adapted to engage the load cell using said offset portion of said upper engagement member.

9. The assembly of claim 7, wherein said upper engagement member further comprises a handle, by means of which rotation of said shaft is facilitated, and which is securable to said upper part such that, in use, said upper engagement member cannot rotate.

10. The assembly of claim 1 wherein said assembly is adapted to be positionable in a further, "transit", position wherein said lower part is secured to said upper part.

11. The assembly of claim 10 wherein, in said operative position, a further shaft secures said lower part to said load cell and, in said transit position, said further shaft secures said upper part to said lower part.

12. The assembly of claim 1 wherein said upper part is of the form of a frame surrounding an interior space, with an orifice providing communication between said interior and exterior spaces, wherein said lower part, in said inoperative position, rests on inner walls of said upper part in a region of the orifice.

13. The assembly of claim 12 wherein said assembly is arranged so that said lower part cannot fall through said orifice.

14. A combination of an assembly for use in suspending a load from a load cell according to claim 1 and a load cell, and wherein said combination further comprises an upper engagement member, by means of which said upper part is adapted to engage said load cell and allow controlled movement of said load cell between said operative and inoperative positions, and a lower engagement member by means of which said lower part is adapted to engage said load cell and fix said lower part vertically relative to said load cell.

15. The combination of claim 14 wherein said load cell is an S-beam load cell.

16. The combination of claim 14 wherein said load cell is adapted to pivot about a connection thereof to said upper part, being a portion of said upper engagement member offset from an axis of said upper engagement member.

17. The combination of claim 14 wherein said lower part rests on a surface of said upper part in said inoperative position, which substantially defines a section of a surface of a sphere with a centre at a point about which said load cell is pivotable.

18. A method of measuring the force due to a load, comprising the steps of:

a) suspending said load from an assembly;

b) fitting said assembly with a load cell; and

c) causing said assembly to transfer said load such that it is being supported by said load cell.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein the step of causing said assembly to transfer said load to said load cell comprises lifting a body associated with said load cell at least partially off a rest.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein said lifting of said body is achieved by means of rotation of a cranked shaft.

21. The method of claim 19, including the step of lowering said body back onto said rest such that said load cell may be removed.

22. An assembly for use in supporting loads on a load cell, comprising:

a lower part adapted to support a load cell; and

an upper part adapted to be supported by said load cell and on which a load can be supported,

wherein, in use, said assembly may be used in at least two positions, including:

an inoperative position wherein said load cell is not fitted, where said upper part, and hence said load, is supported on said lower part; and

an operative position wherein said upper part and said load are supported only through said load cell and said upper part does not rest on said lower part,

and wherein said assembly includes lifting means comprising an upper engagement member, by means of which said upper part is adapted engage said load cell and which allows controlled movement of said upper part relative to said load cell.

23. The assembly of claim 22 wherein said movement controlled by said upper engagement member is at least partially vertical, and wherein said upper engagement member is to raise said upper part relative to said load cell from said operative position to a raised position.

24. The assembly of claim 23 further including fixing means, which are adapted to fix said upper and lower parts together and hence support said upper part on said lower part.

25. The assembly of claim 24 wherein said fixing means are adapted to be introduced in said raised position of said upper part, upon which said upper engagement member lowers said upper part onto said fixing means.

26. The assembly of claim 22 wherein said upper engagement member is adapted to rotate about an axis and has at least one portion offset from this axis, wherein said upper engagement member is adapted to engage said load cell at a portion offset from said axis of rotation.

27. The assembly of claim 26 wherein said upper engagement member engages said upper part such that rotation of said upper engagement member about said axis of rotation causes said upper part to move relative to said load cell.

28. A combination of an assembly for use in supporting loads on a load cell, comprising an assembly according claim 22 and a load cell.

29. The combination of claim 28 wherein said load cell is a shear beam load cell.

30. The combination of claim 28 wherein said load cell engages said upper engagement member about a groove in said load cell.

31. An assembly for use in supporting a load with a load cell, comprising a support for said load cell, a support for said load, and an engagement means adapted to move said load cell and a first one of said supports relative to one another and which is adapted to provide said engagement between said first support and said load cell.

32. The assembly of claim 31 wherein said engagement means is a cranked bar, rotation of which is adapted to cause said relative movement of said first support and said load cell.

33. A combination of the assembly of claim 31 and a load cell.